

Learning Management of Majelis Taklim in Enhancing the Understanding of Islam in Sampang, Madura

Moh. Mahfud¹¹ Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Al Falah Pamekasan, Indonesia**ARTICLE INFO****Article History:**

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ABSTRACT

Majelis taklim, as a non-formal Islamic educational institution, plays a strategic role in strengthening community understanding and practice of Islamic teachings, particularly in Sampang, Madura. Field observations indicate inconsistencies in management practices—covering curriculum, instructor qualifications, and learning media—that affect educational quality. This study analyzes learning management of majelis taklim in Sampang, Madura, through seven components: curriculum design, program planning, learning implementation, instructor professionalism, learning media, institutional management, and the role of majelis taklim in enhancing Islamic understanding. A qualitative case study approach was employed with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and document review at Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi (Sampang Regency) and Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin (Sampang City). Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model and validated through source and method triangulation. Significant differences were found between traditional and semi-formal learning systems across all seven components. These differences directly impact the quality and depth of participants' religious understanding. Effective and adaptive management—supported by structured programs, qualified instructors, and appropriate media—is essential for optimizing the role of majelis taklim as a center of community-based Islamic education.

Corresponding Author :

Moh. Mahfud

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INTRODUCTION

Non-formal education occupies a role no less important than formal education in nurturing the intellectual and spiritual capacities of society. In Indonesia, the government has formally guaranteed its implementation through Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 26 paragraph (1), which stipulates that non-formal education functions as a substitute, complement, and supplement to formal education in support of lifelong learning (UU RI, 2003). The rapid growth of non-formal educational institutions—ranging from *pesantren* to community learning centers—reflects the growing public demand for accessible and contextually relevant education.

Among these institutions, majelis taklim stands out as the most widespread form of non-formal Islamic education in Indonesia. As an institution rooted in community traditions, majelis taklim performs a dual function: transmitting Islamic knowledge and strengthening social cohesion. The Ministry of Religious Affairs defines it as an Islamic educational institution that holds regular and periodic study sessions based on voluntary participation motivated by spiritual needs, as governed by the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 29 of 2019 (Permenag No. 29, 2019). The same regulation mandates majelis taklim to enhance the understanding, appreciation, and practice of Islamic teachings, as well as to perform broader social functions including community empowerment, women's education, and cultural preservation.

Sampang, Madura, presents a particularly compelling context for examining majelis taklim. Field observations conducted by the researchers at two majelis taklim in Sampang Regency and Sampang City in 2022–2023 identified significant variations in management practice. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi* (Sampang Regency), the institution operates with an informal, oral-based curriculum, undocumented programs, and a single weekly session conducted without structured instructor qualification requirements. In contrast, *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin* (Sampang City) employs a semi-formal system with a documented curriculum developed by a dedicated working group (KKMT), bi-weekly sessions, mandatory academic or counseling credentials for instructors, and multimedia-supported learning. These disparities raise concerns about consistency and quality in Islamic education delivery across the region, particularly given that approximately 68% of the population of Sampang Regency actively participates in some form of majelis taklim activity (Badan Pusat Statistik Sampang, 2022).

Theoretically, this study is grounded in George R. Terry's management theory, which defines management as a process encompassing four interrelated functions: planning (*planning*), organizing (*organizing*), actuating (*actuating*), and controlling (*controlling*) — commonly known as the POAC framework (Terry, 2006). This grand theory serves as the analytical lens through which the learning management practices of majelis taklim are examined. Each of the seven research components — curriculum design, program planning, learning implementation, instructor professionalism, learning media, institutional management, and the role of majelis taklim in enhancing Islamic understanding — is analyzed in relation to one or more of these four management functions.

A substantial body of prior research has explored specific dimensions of majelis taklim. Harahap and Manshuruddin (2024) documented that at *Majelis*

Taklim Udaiyah in Deli Serdang, the curriculum encompasses four Islamic disciplines — Tauhid, Fiqh, Tasawuf, and Sirah — taught through classical text study methods. Faturrohman (2019) found that adult learning approaches at *Majelis Taklim Roudotul Muktasidin* in Banten aligned with andragogical principles, particularly in its use of problem-centered and self-actualization strategies. Salis (2020) examined democratic leadership styles at *Pondok Pesantren Ar-Rahmah* in Yogyakarta and their positive effect on majelis taklim development. Nuraeni (2020) demonstrated that *Majelis Taklim Raudhotun Nisa* in Jakarta successfully integrated digital media — including projectors and social media platforms — to serve predominantly elderly congregations. Faruq and El Yunusi (2024) showed that innovative teaching methods at *Majelis Taklim Al-Maryam* in North Jakarta enhanced both religious and civic understanding.

Internationally, Modise (2015) highlighted the flexible and adaptive nature of adult education institutions, arguing that scheduling and delivery must respond to learners' life situations. Edara (2017) emphasized that religious education programs must incorporate cultural values as expressions of community spirituality. Alharbi (2014) stressed the need for continuous curriculum adaptation in response to societal change. Despite these valuable contributions, the existing literature remains fragmented: no prior study has examined the comprehensive learning management of majelis taklim — covering all seven components simultaneously — within a specific socio-cultural locale such as Sampang, Madura. This study fills that gap.

Based on the foregoing rationale, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How is the Islamic religious learning curriculum designed in majelis taklim in Sampang? (2) How are programs planned and organized? (3) How is learning implemented? (4) What is the level of instructor professionalism? (5) What learning media are utilized? (6) How is institutional management structured and carried out? (7) What role does majelis taklim play in enhancing the Islamic understanding of congregants in Sampang, Madura?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach (Yin, 2018). The qualitative approach was selected because the research objective is to explore, describe, and analyze the learning management practices of majelis taklim in depth within their natural socio-cultural setting. The study was conducted at two majelis taklim in Sampang, Madura, Indonesia: (1) *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, located in Sampang Regency, which operates a traditional learning system; and (2) *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, located in Sampang City, which operates a semi-formal learning system. Data collection was carried out from January 2023 to December 2023, spanning a full annual cycle of institutional activities. Research participants were selected using purposive sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Informants included administrators (chairpersons and secretaries of each institution), instructors (two per institution), and active congregational participants (six per institution), totaling 20 informants. Selection criteria required that informants had been actively involved in the institution for at least one year and could provide relevant information on the seven components under investigation.

Three data collection techniques were employed: (1) In-depth interviews conducted with all 20 informants using semi-structured interview guides; (2) Participant observation carried out across multiple learning sessions at both institutions to document actual practices related to curriculum delivery, instructor conduct, and media use; and (3) Document review, examining institutional records including program documents, schedules, instructor qualifications, and organizational charts where available. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which comprises three concurrent activities: (1) *data reduction* — systematically summarizing, coding, and focusing raw data on themes relevant to the seven research components; (2) *data display* — presenting reduced data in narrative and tabular forms to facilitate pattern identification and comparison between the two research sites; and (3) *conclusion drawing and verification* — deriving interpretive conclusions from patterns and verifying them through re-examination of the data. Data validity was established through two triangulation strategies: (1) source triangulation, by cross-checking information from administrators, instructors, and participants; and (2) method triangulation, by comparing data obtained through interviews, observation, and document review. Any inconsistencies identified through triangulation were resolved through follow-up interviews or re-observation until data saturation was reached (Patton, 2015).

This study is limited to two majelis taklim in Sampang, Madura, and therefore the findings are not intended to be generalized to all majelis taklim in Indonesia. The interpretive nature of qualitative inquiry also means that findings reflect the researchers' analytical judgments, which are made explicit through reflexivity and transparent documentation of the research process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study adopts George R. Terry's POAC management theory as its grand theoretical framework. Terry (2006) defines management as a process of achieving organizational goals through and with others, encompassing four sequential and cyclical functions. Planning refers to setting objectives and selecting appropriate strategies to achieve them. In the context of majelis taklim, planning encompasses curriculum design, program formulation, and scheduling decisions. Organizing involves structuring roles, responsibilities, and resources to implement the plan. For majelis taklim, this includes establishing management boards, assigning instructor roles, and allocating facilities. Actuating (directing) refers to motivating and leading people to execute planned activities. In majelis taklim, this manifests in learning implementation, instructor facilitation, and media utilization. Controlling involves monitoring activities and evaluating outcomes to ensure alignment with organizational goals. In majelis taklim, this function governs quality assurance, evaluation of learning outcomes, and institutional accountability.

This POAC framework complements the andragogical principles articulated by Knowles et al. (2015), who argue that adult learners are self-directed, bring prior experience to learning, and are motivated by immediate relevance. The integration of management theory and andragogy provides a comprehensive lens through which both the structural and pedagogical dimensions of majelis taklim can be analyzed. Based on interviews, observations, and document reviews, the data revealed differences in management and learning systems between *Majelis Taklim*

Baytul Ilmi (traditional system) and *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin* (semi-formal system). The following section analyzes these differences against the seven research components, using Terry's (2006) POAC management framework and relevant international scholarship.

Islamic Religious Learning Curriculum in Majelis Taklim

Curriculum is a central instrument of the planning function in Terry's management framework. Field findings indicate that both institutions developed their curricula independently through internal consensus, consistent with Mukmin et al.'s (2023) observation that structured curricula in majelis taklim are typically designed in accordance with institutional frameworks rather than government mandates. A significant planning gap was identified between the two institutions. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, curriculum planning was conducted informally by administrators and instructors without a dedicated team, resulting in a curriculum centered on classical texts (*kitab kuning*) without documented scope and sequence. This approach aligns with traditional pesantren pedagogy but lacks the structured planning that Romiszowski (2016) argues is essential: curriculum design must be undertaken by specialists with sufficient long-term preparation to ensure comprehensiveness and quality.

In contrast, *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin* engaged a Curriculum Division and Curriculum Development Team within the *Kelompok Kerja Majelis Taklim* (KKMT), whose members hold relevant academic qualifications. Their curriculum is documented, periodically reviewed, and aligned with the institution's vision and mission. This practice reflects the planning standards advocated by Alharbi (2014), who demonstrated in the Saudi Arabian educational context that ongoing curriculum adaptation—responsive to societal transformation—is indispensable for institutional quality.

From a management perspective, applying Terry's planning function reveals that effective curriculum development in majelis taklim requires three sequential stages: (1) referencing government guidelines as a foundational framework; (2) identifying congregational needs within the local socio-cultural context (Nasir, 2022); and (3) aligning content with the institution's vision, mission, and objectives. The gap between the two institutions on this dimension suggests that curriculum planning in traditional majelis taklim needs to be formalized through capacity building and the involvement of qualified personnel.

Programs in Majelis Taklim

The organizing function in Terry's framework requires that institutional activities be systematically structured, documented, and assigned to responsible parties. Field data reveal a clear distinction in how the two institutions operationalize this function. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, work programs exist in practice — including short-term, medium-term, and long-term routine activities — but remain undocumented in written form. This absence of written program planning is a significant organizational limitation, as it renders activities vulnerable to discontinuity, reduces accountability, and hinders institutional evaluation (Barus et al., 2025). At *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, tangible documentation of work programs was found, including detailed activity calendars, budget allocations,

timeline schedules, and expected outcomes. These documents enable the institution to monitor program implementation, evaluate results, and plan follow-up actions — all of which constitute the controlling function within Terry's POAC framework.

Analyzing these findings against management theory, program documentation is not merely a bureaucratic exercise; it is a prerequisite for institutional accountability and continuous improvement. Edara (2017) argues that religious programs must incorporate cultural values as expressions of community spirituality, suggesting that program content should be contextually grounded while remaining structurally systematic. Based on this, an effective majelis taklim program model should cover three domains: (1) Islamic religious learning, (2) life skills education, and (3) women's empowerment—each supported by written plans, budgets, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms.

Implementation of Learning in Majelis Taklim

Learning implementation represents the actuating function in Terry's management framework—the stage at which plans are translated into action. Findings reveal differences in scheduling, frequency, and subject coverage between the two institutions. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, sessions are held once a week (Thursday evenings), lasting approximately 1–2 hours, with one subject per meeting. This arrangement, while allowing deeper focus on each topic, limits the breadth of content covered annually. At *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, sessions are held twice weekly (Sunday mornings and Friday afternoons), lasting 2–3 hours each, with three subjects covered per meeting — a structure that significantly increases both frequency and curricular breadth.

Schedule determination is a critical actuating decision. Robbaniyah et al. (2024) emphasize that scheduling in non-formal education must emerge from consensus between administrators, instructors, and members, ensuring that all stakeholders feel ownership over the learning process. Modise (2015) similarly argues that adult education must be flexible and adaptive, accommodating participants' occupational and familial responsibilities. The distinction between conventional majelis taklim (single weekly sessions) and semi-formal majelis taklim (multiple weekly sessions) reflects different strategic orientations: the former prioritizes depth of engagement with individual topics, while the latter prioritizes breadth and resembles formal educational scheduling.

From a management standpoint, effective actuating requires that learning implementation be regularly monitored and adjusted in response to participant feedback and learning outcomes. This integration of actuating and controlling functions ensures that scheduling and session design remain responsive to congregational needs (Knowles et al., 2015).

Professionalism of Instructors in Majelis Taklim

Instructor professionalism directly shapes the actuating function — the quality with which institutional plans are executed in the learning environment. Field data indicate significant differences in qualification standards between the two institutions.

At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, no formal academic credentials are required; instructors are selected based on perceived mastery of Islamic sciences, typically

demonstrated through years of pesantren study. While this approach preserves traditional pedagogical authority, it does not guarantee alignment with contemporary instructional competencies. At *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, instructors are required to hold a degree in Islamic Education or Religious Studies and/or possess certification as a religious counselor (penyuluh agama). This credentialing standard reflects a deliberate actuating decision: ensuring that those who deliver the institution's program are equipped with both content knowledge and pedagogical skill.

Block et al. (2012) emphasize that effective education requires instructors who align with contemporary educational perspectives — a finding that applies equally to non-formal and formal settings. Beyond academic credentials, instructors in majelis taklim must demonstrate competence across several dimensions: deep Islamic knowledge, instructional skills, technological literacy, societal awareness, and community engagement capacity. The organizing function requires that institutions formally define these competency standards, create pathways for professional development, and establish ongoing supervision mechanisms.

The gap in instructor qualification between traditional and semi-formal majelis taklim reflects a broader tension in non-formal Islamic education: the value of traditional scholarly authority versus the demands of professional instructional standards. Effective controlling—through periodic performance evaluation and targeted capacity development—can bridge this gap without undermining the institution's cultural authenticity.

Learning Media in Majelis Taklim

The selection and use of learning media is a practical expression of the actuating function, directly influencing the quality and effectiveness of learning sessions. Aksa (2017) classifies learning media into four types—visual, audio, audiovisual, and multimedia—each serving distinct pedagogical functions. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, only two media types are employed: microphones (audio) to amplify instruction in large congregational settings, and blackboards (visual) for explanatory illustrations. The effectiveness of blackboard use is constrained by the physical distance between instructors and participants at the rear of the gathering space, limiting visual clarity. The absence of more advanced media reflects both resource limitations and a traditional pedagogical orientation that privileges oral transmission of knowledge.

At *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, in addition to traditional media, multimedia tools are actively employed — including PowerPoint presentations, educational videos, and documentary films. Nuraeni (2020) documented a similar integration of digital media at *Majelis Taklim Raudhotun Nisa* in Jakarta, demonstrating that even institutions serving predominantly elderly congregations can leverage technology effectively as both a socialization and educational tool. These findings indicate that multimedia use enhances learner motivation and facilitates comprehension of complex material.

Karolčík, Cipková, and Kinchin (2016) argue that learning media must be applied professionally, with selection guided by evidence of their effectiveness for specific learner groups and content areas. From a management perspective, the planning function requires that media selection be integrated into curriculum and program design, rather than treated as an afterthought. The controlling function

further demands periodic evaluation of media effectiveness to inform future planning. Researchers identify four key functions of learning media that should guide institutional decisions: (1) stimulating motivation, (2) facilitating content delivery, (3) standardizing perceptual understanding, and (4) reducing instructional monotony.

Management in Majelis Taklim

The organizing and controlling functions in Terry's framework are most directly manifested in the institutional management structures of majelis taklim. Management boards constitute the organizational backbone of the institution, and their effectiveness determines the quality of all other management functions. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, a basic management structure exists, including a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, but functional divisions are absent. Decision-making tends to be concentrated in the hands of senior administrators and the lead instructor, without clear delegation or written accountability mechanisms. This centralized structure limits organizational agility and sustainability.

At *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, a more comprehensive management structure is in place, including core board positions and functional divisions: Learning Division, Facilities and Infrastructure, Public Relations, and Religious Commemorative Events (PHBI). Barus et al. (2025) affirm that management structure is the core determinant of institutional progress and congregational quality in majelis taklim, a finding supported by Alemu's (2016) broader organizational leadership research, which demonstrates that functional structure and effective leadership are prerequisites for organizational effectiveness.

Applying Terry's management framework, an effective majelis taklim management model should include at minimum: (1) a Core Board comprising chairperson and vice, secretary and vice, and treasurer and vice; and (2) functional divisions covering learning, facilities, public relations, and community outreach. These structural elements must be supported by clear job descriptions, regular meetings, and a transparent accountability mechanism—all of which constitute the controlling function in organizational management.

The Role of Majelis Taklim in Enhancing Congregational Understanding of Islam

The ultimate purpose of majelis taklim management is to optimize the institution's role in enhancing the Islamic understanding and practice of its congregants. This overarching goal integrates all four functions of Terry's POAC framework: effective planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling collectively determine whether the institution fulfills its strategic mandate. Permenag No. 29 of 2019 articulates eight strategic functions for majelis taklim: (1) providing Islamic religious education for the community; (2) training and developing ustadz/ustadzah, administrators, and members; (3) strengthening social bonds (*silaturahmi*); (4) offering religious counseling and consultation; (5) developing Islamic arts and culture; (6) delivering community-based education; (7) promoting community economic empowerment; and (8) providing enlightenment and serving as a social control mechanism in national life.

Field findings indicate that both institutions contribute meaningfully to religious understanding, though through different means. At *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi*, the emphasis on classical text study cultivates deep doctrinal knowledge and preserves traditional scholarly traditions. Participants report enhanced understanding of Islamic jurisprudence and theology through repeated exposure to canonical texts. At *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin*, the semi-formal system produces measurable outcomes in both religious knowledge and behavioral change, supported by structured evaluation and diverse instructional methods.

Mahfud (2025) notes that deeper religious understanding among the public positively influences lifestyle patterns within families and communities, reducing conflict and providing a framework for addressing personal and social challenges. Sepehri and Montazeri (2019) similarly observe that spiritually-oriented community institutions serve critical functions in social cohesion and environmental sustainability. Two major dimensions of majelis taklim's social impact are identifiable: (1) the *spiritual/religious dimension*, which enhances congregants' doctrinal knowledge, fosters behavioral alignment with Islamic values, and improves worship quality; and (2) the *social and cultural dimension*, which preserves Islamic cultural heritage and provides platforms for life skills development and community problem-solving.

Analyzing these findings through Terry's framework reveals that the controlling function—through regular evaluation of learning outcomes and congregational feedback—is essential for ensuring that majelis taklim remains relevant, responsive, and impactful. Without systematic evaluation, institutions risk maintaining activities that no longer address the evolving spiritual and practical needs of their communities.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the learning management of majelis taklim in Sampang, Madura, through the lens of Terry's POAC management framework, examining seven components: curriculum design, program planning, learning implementation, instructor professionalism, learning media, institutional management, and the institutional role in enhancing Islamic understanding. Findings reveal systematic and significant differences between the traditional system of *Majelis Taklim Baytul Ilmi* and the semi-formal system of *Majelis Taklim Al-Muttaqin* across all seven components. Analyzed through the POAC framework, these differences reflect uneven application of the four management functions—particularly planning and controlling—across the two institutions. The traditional institution demonstrates strength in cultural continuity and community embeddedness but requires formalization of curriculum planning, program documentation, instructor qualification standards, and evaluation mechanisms. The semi-formal institution demonstrates stronger structural management but must guard against over-formalization that may alienate traditional congregants. These findings contribute to the literature by demonstrating that Terry's management theory provides a productive analytical framework for evaluating non-formal Islamic education, and that andragogical principles—particularly flexibility, relevance, and participant agency—must be integrated into management planning to optimize outcomes. Future research should examine the longitudinal effects of management quality on

congregants' religious understanding and behavioral change, and should include a larger sample of majelis taklim across diverse regional contexts to enable broader generalization.

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